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Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone

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Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) for the 12-month period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 (A/54/455). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General who provided additional information.

2. The Committee notes the improved presentation of the budget but believes there is room for further improvement, in particular as regards the explanations of increases/decreases in the annexes.

3. The original budget of UNOMSIL (A/53/454/Add.1) amounted to $16,412,400 gross ($15,560,400 net) and was based on the strength of 70 military observers, a 15-person medical unit and 5 civilian police advisers supported by 50 international civilian and 48 local staff, authorized by Security Council resolution 1181 (1998) of 13 July 1998.

4. Having reviewed the proposed budget on 22 February 1999, the Advisory Committee, owing to the prevailing security situation and uncertainty as to the future deployment of UNOMSIL at that time, refrained from making recommendations to the General Assembly on the budget. As a result, the Fifth Committee took no action during its resumed fifty-third session on the financing of UNOMSIL for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000.

5. By a letter dated 15 June 1999, the Advisory Committee concurred with the request of the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in the amount not exceeding $5,470,800 gross ($5,186,800 net) for the maintenance of UNOMSIL for the 4-month period from 1 July to 31 October 1999 (see annex I).

6. Following the signing on 7 July 1999 of the Lomé Peace Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone, the Secretary-General, in his seventh report to the Security Council on UNOMSIL (S/1999/836 and Add.1), set out his recommendations on the immediate measures that should be taken to strengthen the Mission, including the deployment to Sierra Leone of an additional 140 military observers, the introduction of a second-line medical capability of 35 personnel and the strengthening of the Mission with additional civilian staff.

7. By its resolution 1260 (1999) of 20 August 1999, the Security Council, *inter alia*, authorized the provisional expansion of UNOMSIL to up to 210 military observers along with the necessary equipment and administrative and medical support, as well as the strengthening of the political, civil affairs, information, human rights and child protection

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elements of UNOMSIL, as set out in the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General (S/1999/836, paras. 40-52), including the appointment of a deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the expansion of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

8. Pending the completion of the present report and in order to provide for the immediate operational requirements of UNOMSIL with regard to the deployment of additional military observers and a medical unit, as well as the acquisition of vehicles, communications and other equipment, the Advisory Committee, by a letter dated 20 September 1999, concurred with the request of the Secretary-General to enter into additional commitments in an amount not exceeding $6,437,300 (see annex II). Thus, the total commitment authority provided by the Advisory Committee for the maintenance of UNOMSIL and for its provisional expansion amounts to $11,908,100 gross ($11,624,100 net).

9. The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 30 September 1999, of the $11,624,100 approved by the Committee, expenditure had amounted to $3,562,800, leaving an unencumbered balance of $8,197,900.

10. The Advisory Committee notes from table 1 of document A/54/455 that the revised budget of UNOMSIL for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 amounts to $34,382,400 (gross), an increase of $17,970,000 when compared to the original estimate of $16,412,400 for the same period. The increase is due to the additional requirements for the provisional expansion of UNOMSIL, authorized by the Security Council in resolution 1260 (1999).

11. As indicated in paragraphs 13 to 18 of document A/54/455, the cost estimates provide for 210 military observers, 5 civilian police officers and an additional 60 international staff (31 Professional and 29 Field Service) and 21 local staff, for a revised total of 110 international staff (54 Professional, 47 Field Service and 9 General Service) and 69 local staff, including the upgrading of the post levels of Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Finance Officer. The cost estimates also reflect the increase in the number of medical personnel, from 15 to 35.

12. The revised estimates do not include requirements for the proposed peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone proposed by the Secretary-General to the Security Council in his eighth report (S/1999/1003). The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 1 of document A/54/455 that, should the Security Council authorize the deployment of the force, related additional resource requirements would be submitted to the General Assembly in an addendum to that document.

13. The Advisory Committee notes from section C of annex I to document A/54/455 that staff costs are based on the 1999 standard salary costs for New York and local salary scale applicable to the Mission area and reflect the application of a projected vacancy rate of 10 per cent for international and local staff, as well as salary and common staff costs adjustments for 70 per cent of international staff classified as Mission appointees. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that these cost factors took into account the current vacancy situation in the Mission area and the new personnel positions that have been proposed. With regard to vacancies, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 8 October 1999, of 50 international and 48 local authorized posts, 38 and 46 respectively, were encumbered. The Advisory Committee was also informed that the security situation in the operational area had improved. That being the case, the Advisory Committee urges that speedy recruitment of personnel be undertaken to ensure the full implementation of the mandate of the Mission.

14. An amount of $9.9 million is proposed in annex I to document A/54/455 for military observers. The Advisory Committee notes from the eighth report of the Secretary-General (S/1999/1003) that 181 military observers would be assigned to reception and demobilization centres. The eighth report of the Secretary-General also makes provision for full-scale disarmament activities in Sierra Leone. The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 8 October 1999, of 210 authorized positions for military observers, 141 were encumbered. In this connection, the Advisory Committee requests that the placement of military observers in the Mission area should be carefully synchronized with the start of the functions to which they would be assigned.

15. The Advisory Committee notes from section C of annex II to document A/54/455 that an estimate of $4,175,100 is proposed for non-recurrent items. The Advisory Committee also notes that some of the unit costs of a number of items differ from the unit costs contained in the most recent standard cost manual for peacekeeping operations (Revision 4, 1998). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the unit costs shown in document A/54/455 reflected the most recent experience with bulk and discount procurement prices. The Advisory Committee was further informed that the manual was being revised and would be ready for use in the preparation of the budgets for the period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recommends that the terms and classification used in the manual should be

used consistently in budget documents. The Advisory Committee points out that savings in procurement activities would arise to the extent that current estimates are not based on actual costs of services already contracted for; such savings should be reflected in the performance report.

16. Upon enquiry as to the pace of procurement for UNOMSIL, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 13 October 1999, communications equipment worth $438,101 of the $456,800 budgeted, and data-processing equipment worth $486,851 of the $523,100 budgeted, had been purchased.

17. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 15 of section C of annex I to document A/54/455 that provision for usage charges of $400,000 for medical equipment is made at an estimated monthly rate of $50,000, based on a projected value of equipment of $1.5 million. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that reimbursement would be made to the contributing government for the estimated usage charges for medical equipment provided on a wet-lease basis.

18. The Advisory Committee also notes from item 42 of section A of annex II to document A/54/455 that an amount of $226,800 is provided for medical services, based on the standard self-sustainment reimbursement rate of $78.75 per person for an average of 360 personnel. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that this rate was equivalent to the established self-sustainment rate for the second-line medical services payable to a government providing these services to its own personnel and to other international personnel at the expense of the United Nations, should the Organization or governments providing these personnel be unable to arrange for medical services. The Advisory Committee was further informed that, for budgeting purposes, estimates for medical services were based on the authorized strength of the military component and international civilian personnel, including police advisers. The Committee was also informed that routine medical care for local staff is provided through local medical establishments and is subsidized by the Organization through the medical insurance plan administered in the field. Nevertheless, local staff have full access to the United Nations medical facility in life-threatening and emergency situations. In this connection, the Committee points out that the amount of $440,000 provided for in item 9 (a) of section III of annex I to document A/54/455 is in fact for the transport of medical equipment and not of contingent-owned equipment.

19. With regard to air operations, the Advisory Committee notes from paragraphs 12 and 13 of section C of annex I to document A/54/455 that an amount of $3,348,800 is requested for two medium utility helicopters and one fixed-wing aircraft. The original cost estimate of $1,752,700 for 12 months provided for one medium utility helicopter and one fixed-wing aircraft. Upon enquiry as to how the addition of one helicopter would lead to an increase of $1,596,100, the Advisory Committee was informed that, besides the second helicopter, the increase in the cost estimate under this item was mainly due to the increase in the cost of aviation fuel, which went up from $0.25 to $0.37 per litre based on the current contract for aviation fuel, and the cost of positioning/depositioning of the helicopters ($270,000) and of painting ($35,000), which had not been included in the original estimate; moreover, there was higher consumption of aviation fuel due to an increase in the extra flying hours per month which rose from 30 to 45 for each helicopter.

20. The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 8 October 1999, amounts totalling $15.8 million had been assessed on Member States for the period from 13 July 1998 to 13 March 1999, while payments received for the same period totalled $13.0 million, leaving a shortfall of $2.8 million. The Advisory Committee was further informed that cash available as at 8 October 1999 amounted to $5 million, while unliquidated obligations for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 stood at $2.2 million. The Advisory Committee was also informed that, as at 8 October 1999, an amount of $4.2 million was borrowed from the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund.

21. Upon enquiry as to when the amount borrowed from the Reserve Fund would be refunded, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Secretariat considered it prudent to reimburse the amount at a subsequent stage. In this connection, the Advisory Committee requests the Secretary-General to provide information on the operation of the Reserve Fund in his report to be submitted to the Advisory Committee at its winter session.

22. The action to be taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session in connection with the financing of UNOMSIL is outlined in paragraph 22 of document A/54/455. The Secretary-General recommends that the General Assembly: (a) appropriate the amount of $34,382,400 gross ($32,870,100 net) for the operation of UNOMSIL for the 12-month period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000, inclusive of the amount of $11,908,100 gross ($11,624,100 net) already authorized by the Advisory Committee; (b) assess the amount of $15,472,080 gross ($14,791,545 net) for the period from 1 July to 13 December 1999; and (c) assess the amount of $18,910,320 gross ($18,078,555 net) for the maintenance of UNOMSIL for the period from 14 December 1999 to 30 June 2000, at a

monthly rate of $2,865,200 gross ($2,739,175 net), subject to the extension of the mandate of UNOMSIL by the Security Council beyond 13 December 1999. The Advisory Committee recommends approval of the appropriation and assessment proposed by the Secretary-General.

Annex I

Letter dated 15 June 1999 from the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions addressed to the Secretary-General

The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the Controller's letter of 11 June 1999, requesting the concurrence of the Advisory Committee to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $5,470,800 gross ($5,186,800 net) for the maintenance of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) for a 4-month period from 1 July to 31 October 1999. This request is made pursuant to section IV of General Assembly resolution 49/233 of 23 December 1994.

During its winter session, the Advisory Committee considered your report on the proposed budget of UNOMSIL for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 (A/53/454/Add.1).

At that time, owing to the prevailing security situation in Sierra Leone and uncertainty as to the future deployment of UNOMSIL, the Advisory Committee refrained from making recommendations to the General Assembly on the budget. As a result, the Fifth Committee took no action during its recently concluded resumed fifty-third session on the financing of UNOMSIL for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000.

In your sixth report to the Security Council on UNOMSIL (S/1999/645), you informed the Council, *inter alia*, that the peace process in Sierra Leone had made significant progress since your previous report (S/1999/237), culminating in the signing of a ceasefire agreement of 18 May 1999 and the start of dialogue between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front at Lomé on 25 May 1999.

You also indicated in paragraph 49 of your report that with the planned deployment of 16 military observers during the month of June 1999, together with the necessary support personnel, vehicles, communications and other essential equipment, the military capacity of the Mission would be restored to the level it had attained in December 1998 and that, security conditions permitting, you would then proceed to deploy additional observers up to the limit of 70, with an additional 15 medical personnel, as authorized by Security Council resolution 1181 (1998) of 13 July 1998.

By its resolution 1245 (1999) of 11 June 1999, the Security Council decided, *inter alia*, to extend the mandate of the Observer Mission until 13 December 1999.

In view of the extension of the mandate of UNOMSIL by the Security Council and pending the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and action by the General Assembly on the full 12-month budget of the Observer Mission at its fifty-fourth session, including such revised estimates as may be necessary as the result of the expansion of UNOMSIL, the Advisory Committee concurs with your request to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $5,470,800 gross ($5,186,800 net) for the maintenance of UNOMSIL for a 4-month period from 1 July to 31 October 1999.

(*Signed*) C. S. M. **Mselle**
Chairman

Annex II

Letter dated 20 September 1999 from the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions addressed to the Secretary-General

The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the Controller's letter of 14 September 1999, seeking the concurrence of the Advisory Committee to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $6,437,300 for the deployment of an additional 140 military observers and a medical unit, as well as the acquisition of vehicles, communication and other equipment for the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). This request is made pursuant to section IV of General Assembly resolution 49/233 of 23 December 1994 on administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

During its winter session, the Advisory Committee considered your report on the proposed budget of UNOMSIL for the period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 (A/53/454/Add.1).

At that time, owing to the prevailing security situation in Sierra Leone and uncertainty as to the future deployment of UNOMSIL, the Advisory Committee refrained from making recommendations to the General Assembly on the budget. As a result, the Fifth Committee took no action during its resumed fifty-third session on the financing of UNOMSIL for the period from 1 July 1999 to 2000.

By its resolution 1245 (1999) of 11 June 1999, the Security Council decided, *inter alia*, to extend the mandate of UNOMSIL until 13 December 1999.

In view of the extension of the mandate of UNOMSIL by the Security Council and pending the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and action by the General Assembly on the full 12-month budget of the Observer Mission at its fifty-fourth session, the Advisory Committee, by a letter dated 15 June 1999, concurred with the request to enter into commitments in the amount of $5,470,800 gross ($5,186,800 net) for the maintenance of the Observer Mission for the 4-month period from 1 July to 31 October 1999.

In your seventh report to the Security Council on UNOMSIL (S/1999/836 and Add.1), you recommended the immediate measures that should be taken to strengthen the Observer Mission, including the deployment to Sierra Leone of additional military observers, the introduction of a second-line medical capability of 35 personnel and the strengthening of the Observer Mission with additional civilian staff.

By its resolution 1260 (1999) of 20 August 1999, the Security Council, *inter alia*, authorized the provisional expansion of UNOMSIL to up to 210 military observers along with the necessary equipment and administrative and medical support to perform the tasks set out in paragraph 38 of your report. The Council also authorized strengthening of the political, civil affairs, information, human rights and child protection elements of UNOMSIL, as set out in paragraphs 40 to 52 of your report, including the appointment of a deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the expansion of the Office of Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

The Advisory Committee was informed by your representatives that the full estimated requirements for the provisional expansion of the Observer Mission were currently being finalized and would be submitted to the Committee and the General Assembly by the end of September 1999 in the context of the revised budget of UNOMSIL for the 1999-2000 financial period.

Under the circumstances, pursuant to section IV of General Assembly resolution 49/233 of 23 December 1994, the Advisory Committee concurs with your request to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $6,437,300 for the deployment of the additional 140 military observers and a medical unit, as well as the acquisition of vehicles, communication and other equipment for UNOMSIL. Thus, the total commitment authority provided to you for the maintenance of the Observer Mission and for its provisional expansion would amount to $11,908,100 gross ($11,624,100 net).

(*Signed*) C. S. M. **Mselle**
Chairman